



SB24-202 Assignment of Child Support Foster Youth

Background

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), in partnership with county governments, operates the state's child welfare system and the Child Support Services (CSS) program to ensure that all children/youth live in safe, permanent, and stable environments that support their well-being and that children/youth get the financial support they need to thrive. On July 29, 2022, federal guidance was issued to encourage child welfare agencies to adopt across-the-board policies that secure an assignment of the rights to child support only in very rare circumstances and to update their systems to not refer parents to the child support agency by default.

Issue

Currently, Colorado law states that all rights to current and accrued child support are assigned by operation of law to the state department to reimburse county, state, and federal out-of-home placement costs when children/youth are placed in foster care. When families don't comply there are enforcement actions such as Credit Reporting, Drivers License Suspensions, and Financial Account Levies. Any families unable to comply with child support are highly likely to experience any of these enforcement actions. Child support often accumulates for families severed by the Child Welfare System and Colorado Families further find themselves in financial hardship possibly putting them in worse scenarios and lessening their chances of reunification.

Proposed Solution

This bill eliminates the blanket approach to the automatic assignment of child support for families involved in the foster care system and instead will assign child support by individualized approach when applicable. The Colorado Department of Human Services recommends the following statutory changes because we know that families being served in the child welfare system are often Colorado families already struggling to meet their basic needs. This bill ensures that we don't add to the time families are separated and rather remove the child support barrier in the applicable cases to ensure we empower Colorado Families in reunification efforts.

Proposal Contact

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